

outweigh considerations of mere expediency or apparent self-interest. Nor is it possible to give such moral instruction and training without involving something of the religious spirit, if not of religious education."

With these sentiments, I confess I am in substantial agreement. I believe that moral and religious training is as essential to qualify for useful citizenship as the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the intellectual faculties. I would, therefore, approve of such moral and religious training in the public schools as may be given, without coming into collision with the religious convictions of the parents who make up the constituency of the schools. While there is so much ethical and religious truth held in common by all Christians, I cannot see why it should be impossible to unite in a practical recognition of those common religious principles that bear on character and conduct.

But this general inculcation of religious duty should be carried out more by the spirit and conduct of the teacher, and the way in which discipline is administered, than by formal didactic instruction. The public schools of Ontario and Manitoba are probably as near what public schools ought to be as is practicable in the present condition of things. Lessons on moral conduct might be added with advantage. I do not agree with those who think the reading of a portion of Scripture and the offering of prayer are too small a thing to be worth contending for. There is in this simple exercise a recognition of the divine authority, which is adapted to make an enduring impression on the minds of children.

Though I hold strong views as to the importance of religious education, I have no sympathy with a good deal that is said in favour of religious teaching in the public

schools. It is frequently assumed, that if the children are not taught theology in the school, they will be left to grow up irreligious and immoral. This notion throws discredit upon the work and influence of the Christian Churches. The public services of the churches, the teaching in Sunday-schools, the abundant supply of religious literature, and the influence of Christian home life should not be thrust out of sight as if they were of no account, in order to magnify the importance of doctrinal teaching in the school. As a matter of fact, if you take the godly men and women of any church, and inquire by what human agency they were brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, you will find that only an infinitesimally small proportion of them would ascribe their religious character to instruction received in school. Neither is there any satisfactory evidence that the children educated in church schools present a higher type of moral character than those educated in national schools. Many facts support a contrary conclusion.

The teaching of church creeds in Government schools involves the principle of the union of Church and State—that is, of the State choosing a religion for the people; and applying public money to pay for teaching such religion. This is something which the Protestants of this country will not approve, except, as in the case of this Province, a formal agreement renders it obligatory to make a special concession.

The loudest demand for religious teaching in the schools is generally made by those who desire to have the peculiar doctrines of their creed taught, rather than sound Christian morals. The demand is almost always sectarian rather than religious. This is seen in the case of the Roman Catholics. While they condemn unsectarian public